

REVIEW

A JOURNAL OF TRAVELS INTO THE ARKANSAS TERRITORY DURING THE YEAR 1819 by Thomas Nuttall. Edited by Savoie Lottinville. xxviii + 361 pp. frontis. and 8 illus. Univ. Oklahoma Press, Norman. 1980. \$25.00.

September 8, 1819. "We were, for several days, destitute of any kind of food, except the tails of the beaver, the flesh of this animal being now too lean and musky to be eaten." Two sentences later: "amongst several other new plants, I found a very curious *Gaura*" and five other genera. "Always aiming at the real and substantial," as Jacob Bigelow (the anonymous reviewer) remarked in 1823, this "plain, unvarnished tale" has not been available as a whole with annotations since Reuben Gold Thwaites (1905). This latest edition offers more for the naturalist because over the seventy five years, studies by Pennell, Geiser, Goodman, Beidleman, McKelvey, Graustein, and Stuckey, have enriched the text. A dark impression but readable and useful facsimile of the *Journal* was published in 1966 by Readex Imprint Corporation. The Nuttall panoramas were printed too dark and "a map of the Arkansas River" reduced as to be viewed from a satellite. Geiser published a meticulous analysis of the month-long diversionary excursion from Fort Smith to the Red River, with suggested plant identities, in 1956, that has been followed by Lottinville. This attractive edition, advantageously well indexed, is Nuttall *redivivus*.

There are pockets of curiosity: where did Nuttall know the African succulents, the genus *Stapelia*? Perhaps in the Liverpool Botanic Garden? Or later, at William Hamilton's "Woodlands"? Relying on the insubstantial Du Pratz account what were the "India Ducks" that Nuttall mentioned? When one reads the Du Pratz reference muscovy ducks come to mind. Nuttall repeats the name "*Populus angulisans*" for a poplar suggesting that it was not altogether a *lapsus calami*; perhaps a manuscript name which he later decided to abandon?

A few marginalia in my copy: *Catalpa cordifolia* Jaume-St Hilaire in Duhamel, *Arbustum* ed. Nov. 2 (1804) 13. pl. 5.—a book which Nuttall presumably saw at the Academy Library while he was writing the text—suggests he was distinguishing his catalpa from Walter's *C. bignonioides* which he would have known. When Nuttall cited *Schrankia horridula* (p. 180 of the original) he may have intended to transfer Michaux's *Mimosa horridula* which again, he found in a work familiar to him. *Boebera glandulosa* was misread (p. 55): the name was published by Persoon, *Synopsis*, 2 (1807) 459, and should be related to the well known "Fetid marigold" (*Dyssodia papposa* (Vent.) Hitchc.).

When queries pose the answer may be found in two overlooked commentaries: by Richard Beidleman (*Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 15 (1956) 249–259), and Ronald Stuckey, a review of Graustein's biography (*Rhodora*

70 (1968) 429–438), which included a bibliography of articles about Nuttall. In a letter quoted by Beidleman (p. 256) Nuttall wrote to his patron Zaccheus Collins from Fort Smith on May 12, 1819, mentioning the sketches included in the book, the originals of which have never been located. In the same letter Nuttall solicited support for an exploration of the western Gulf Coast that he was never able to visit. That Pursh had earlier proposed, presumably to Joseph Banks, a joint exploration into the Southwest (*Huntia* 3 (1979) 83–86) was Nuttall's well kept secret.

A portrait of Nuttall drawn by Derby, engraved by Thomson and intended by the publisher Henry Fisher of Liverpool for a London edition of the *Travels* was never issued. Jepson told the story in *Madroño* (2: frontis. 1934). The portrait has been cropped as a frontispiece here so that Nuttall's Napoleonic gesture is eliminated.

When Nuttall prefaced his *Journal* he remarked that his narrative was not addressed to those "who vaguely peruse for pastime or transitory amusement" but since 1821 there has been an appetite for Americana and Nuttall's story is a "limpid account" (Geiser) of trial and conflict, misery and triumph, stolen horses, quicksands, a skyfull of grasshoppers, bison bulls "lean and agile" the large head hid in bushy locks, galloping "like so many huge lions." *Joseph Ewan, Department of Biology, Tulane University, New Orleans, LA 70118.*